

TO THE
Chairman and Members
OF THE
STOWMARKET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

15TH JANUARY, 1904.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour of presenting to you my SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT on the health of Stowmarket for the year ending 31st December, 1903.

VITAL STATISTICS.

I have based the following statistics on the population at the last census, as at present I can obtain no available data of any change one way or the other.

Birth Rate, 17.2 per 1000. During the year there were 72 births (42 males and 30 females), which gives a Birth Rate of 17.2 per 1000. This is the lowest Birth Rate for very many years—I can trace back the Birth Rate for twenty-eight years, but there is nothing like it, and it is 7.8 per 1000 lower than the average for the preceding ten years. The Birth Rate for England and Wales in 1903 was 28.4 per 1000, and for the East Stow Rural District 26.9 per 1000.

Death Rate, 13.9 per 1000. The number of Deaths registered during the year was 52 (26 males and 26 females). Six of the persons who died in the Workhouse belonged to Stowmarket, and these added to the above give a total of 58, and a Death Rate of 13.9 per 1000, compared with 12.9 per 1000 last year. This is still considerably under the average Death Rate for the previous ten years, which was 15.4 per 1000. The Death Rate for England and Wales in 1903 was 15.4 per 1000, and for the East Stow Rural District 13.5 per 1000.

Infant Mortality, 97.2 per 1000 Births. There were 7 deaths registered of infants under one year of age, equal to an Infant Mortality of 97.2 per 1000 Births, still showing the improvement noted last year. This Rate for England in 1903 was 132 per 1000 Births, and for the East Stow Rural District 106 per 1000 Births.

Zymotic Diseases. There was only 1 death caused by any of the seven principal Zymotic Diseases, viz., 1 from whooping cough. Last year there were no deaths from any of these diseases.

Other Deaths. Amongst the other deaths I have still to note a large number caused by phthisis, viz., 8, and a great falling off in the number of deaths caused by cancer. Only 6 deaths were caused by diseases of the respiratory organs, probably due to the mildness of the weather throughout the year. 5 were caused by heart disease, 2 by accident, and 8 persons died of old age. (See Table IV.)

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The number of notifications of Infectious Diseases was the same as last year, viz., 12, as follows:—Diphtheria, 5 (the same as last year); erysipelas, 3 (compared with 4 last year); scarlet fever, 3 (compared with 1 last year); enteric fever, 1 (compared with 2 last year).

There were no deaths, and it was not necessary to open the Infectious Diseases Hospital.

The usefulness of this Hospital is curtailed owing to the want of a disinfecting apparatus and a cottage for a permanent attendant.

Bake-houses.

During the year the bake-houses were inspected twice, viz., in January and May. They were found to be in a satisfactory sanitary condition, except in one case, where a slight defect in drainage was ordered to be remedied. This has since been done.

Slaughter-houses.

The slaughter-houses were visited at different times and inspected systematically, and were found to be in a fairly satisfactory sanitary condition.

Lodging-houses.

The lodging-houses were also visited and no complaints had to be made of their sanitary condition.

Refuse Disposal.

The refuse from the houses in the town is removed twice a week and carted to the outskirts of the town, turned over and sold. The question of a proper form of receptacles for refuse, suggested in my report last year, still remains for discussion. The nightsoil is collected by the Council and sold.

Factory Act, 1901.

With regard to the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901, there are 45 workshops in the district. They were visited and inspected as required. In one case of over-crowding and insufficient ventilation, the over-crowding has since been abated and the ventilation put right. In another case where there was defective closet accommodation, although notice was served in May by the Factory Inspector, the work has not been carried out.

Extracts from the Sanitary Inspector's Reports for the year.

Sanitary Inspector.

"In a house in Crow Street the sink waste, &c., discharged into a pipe without any outlet." This house is now used as store-rooms. Some houses in Ipswich Street have no drainage at all, the soil flowing through pipes into tubs, and then over-flowing on to the gardens, where it is allowed to "ferment and stink." Two houses in Bury Road drain into a ditch, which is in a "filthy condition and only 7ft. from one of the houses." Two cottages in Bury Street, "I found the floors of the closets covered with sewage matter, the receptacles being made of wood, with all the joints defective." These have since been replaced by iron buckets.

In Cardinals Road and Stowupland Street four cottages were found to be drained into the river. The two in Cardinals Road have been disconnected and drained into the sewer, but the two in Stowupland Street still remain as noted. Complaints were received of the smell from the river behind Cardinals Road, when it was found that some of the inhabitants had been in the habit of throwing all refuse into it; the refuse cart was therefore ordered to call once a week in this district. A house in Bury Street—"the vault over-flowing into a yard"; this has since been remedied. A house in Crow Street—"the drainage so defective that the sewage had soaked into the cellar wall"; this has been remedied.

Throughout the year the Sanitary Inspector also notes very frequently that he finds vaults "very defective in construction and not sealed."

During the year 38 defective traps have been condemned and replaced properly under the direction of your Surveyor. 75 vaults have been replaced by water closets; this makes 154 vaults done away with during the last nineteen months. 54 more houses have had the water-works water laid on.

Sewage Disposal.

The sewage gravitates to the pumping station, from there it is pumped up to the sewage farm through 11in. rising main into filtering tanks. The sludge is separated and the effluent flows on to the land, then through osier beds, and from thence to the river Gipping.

Sewerage,**Drainage, and
Water
Supply.**

In my First Annual Report to your Council I made the following remarks :—

“With reference to the drinking water of Stowmarket I wish to call your special attention to the state of the wells. I have now had an opportunity of examining several of them and without exception have found them polluted with sewage.

“The reason for this is obvious. Stowmarket is built on gravel and sand overlying clay. The rain water falling on the surface partly sinks through the upper layers till it reaches the clay, where it forms the springs which supply all the Stowmarket wells (except the wells at the water works, which are bored wells passing through this clay into the under-lying chalk).

“Vaults so large that they are only cleaned out once or twice a year; cesspools, many of which are not cleaned out till they flow over, are all over the town. These vaults, cesspools, and also the sewers and drains are now more or less (chiefly more) leaky, so that the ground round them is saturated with sewage matter. The rain will therefore wash down more or less of this sewage into the wells. In gravel and sand, wells should not be within 160ft. to 200ft. of any cesspool or sewer.”

In conjunction with the above remarks, I take the following extracts from reports submitted to the Council by your Surveyor :—

LIME TREE PLACE.—“The 9in. sewer at the back of Lime Tree Place on private grounds is completely blocked. The length of this sewer is 710ft., and the pipes are more than half full of silt. This sewer is laid to a depth of three to four feet, and is in a good part of its length built over. It discharges into Bridge Street, and thence into the new 12in. cast iron sewer in the allotments.”

This sewer has, since the report, been abandoned and a new sewer constructed. The old one was found to be very badly laid, the joints defective, and no proper falls.

“There is a 9in. sewer in Lime Tree Place into which the houses on one side of the street only can drain into, consequently the above sewer was put in at the back of the houses. The connections to the sewer are very badly done.”

BRIDGE STREET.—“The 9in. sewer is blocked for a distance of 54 yards, due to bad construction.” This has been cleaned out, but will have to be reconstructed.

CROWN STREET.—“The 24in. brick sewer having partly collapsed has been reconstructed.”

BURY STREET.—“The 9in. butt pipe sewer was the cause of the blockage, the pipes being crushed in for a length of 12 yards.”

“The 12in. sewer has apparently at some time been under repair, as a 4ft. length of 6in. cast iron pipe, with broken flange, has been let in between the 12in. pipes. Lower down the 4in. gas main went clean through one of the pipes, also a lead water pipe went through the 9in. sewer.” This sewer has been partly reconstructed.

VIOLET HILL.—“The 9in. butt pipe sewer blocked—houses flooded with sewage.” This has been partly reconstructed.

CHURCH LANE.—“The 6in. butt pipe sewer has been relaid with 6in. glazed pipes.”

STOWUPLAND STREET.—“The 9in. sewer—a house is connected with it in this way: the pipes stop short against the water works main and then continuing on the other side of the main, actually being bricked round, the flange and socket being in the pit. The sewage had actually to get to the level of the top of the pipe in order that it could discharge to the other side. The water main was laid in before the sewer.” This has been remedied. This sewer is made up with butt and glazed pipes.

“With regard to the 9in. sewer which crosses the road, the pipes were all smashed. The 9in. brick drain, which was partly made up with 6in. glazed pipes, I have filled up and disconnected.”

MAIN BRICK SEWER, CHURCH LANE.—“ Received notice of considerable escape of sewer gas into houses in Church Lane. I have had the 24in. sewer opened up and examined. In the living room of one house the rats had worked some of the bricks out of the sewer and part of the top had fallen in. We found a brick chamber, 5ft. 6in. by 2ft. 6in., filled with black blood. In the lane the sewer had no bottom, there being a sump two feet below the inverts, which was full of decomposed sewage and offal from slaughter-houses. Further along the sewer was defective. Nine w.c.’s are connected on to the top of the sewer—when connected the top of the sewer was knocked in and the bricks left in the sewer, and under the closets were 18in. of sewage. Up to the present we have taken out several cart loads of sewage, bottles, tin kettles, chains, bricks, &c. This sewer takes the sewage of fifteen streets and lanes.” This is under repair and partial reconstruction.

There are several wells still being used for domestic and trade purposes within dangerous proximity to these sewers.

Unfortunately the water supplied by the water works, besides being very hard, contains a large quantity of iron. On account of the mains not being kept well washed out, this iron, with other salts, becomes deposited in them and is occasionally washed into pipes supplying the houses. When this is the case the water is certainly very unsightly, and in consequence it has produced a certain amount of prejudice, amongst the unscientific classes of society in Stowmarket, against the water. The Company have now issued orders, which will shortly be carried out, to have all the wash-outs reconstructed; when this has been done the mains will be washed out every fortnight. This will be a very great improvement, and if only some of the iron could be removed and the water made less hard, the opposition to the only safe supply of drinking water we have in the town would cease.

Table I. shows the estimated population and birth and death rates for the last ten years.

Table III. shows the cases of infectious diseases notified and particulars as to the age of the persons affected.

Table IV. shows the causes of, and ages at, death during the year.

In conclusion, I have to acknowledge the great help I have received from the Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor, and to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council for the considerate manner in which they have always received my suggestions.

I have the honour to remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

CHAS. W. LOW, M.B., D.P.H., &c.,

Medical Officer of Health.

TABLE I.

Year.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	Births.		Total Deaths registered in the District.				Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District.	Deaths of Non-residents registered in the District.	Deaths of Residents registered beyond the District.	Nett Deaths at all Ages belonging to the District.		
				Under 1 year of age.		At all ages.					No.		
		No.	Rate.*	No.	Rate per 1000 Births regis.	No.	Rate.*				No.	Rate.*	
1893	4310	99	22.9								89	20.6	
1894	4291	117	27.2								53	12.3	
1895	4274	109	25.5								59	14.0	
1896	4256	107	25.1	10	93						58	14.0	
1897	4238	109	25.7	12	110						64	15.1	
1898	4221	98	23.2	17	171	71	16.8		6	77	18.2		
1899	4202	103	24.5	13	126	56	12.8		4	60	14.2		
1900	4185	104	24.8	16	153	70	16.7		1	71	16.9		
1901	4162	114	27.3	20	175	66	15.8		3	69	16.4		
1902	4162	92	24.5	9	97.8	51	12.2		3	54	12.9		
Averages for years 1893-1902		104	25.0	13.8	132	62	14.9		3	65	15.4		
1903	4162	72	17.2	7	97.2	52	12.4		6	58	13.9		

* Rates calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water) ... 2177

Total population at all ages 4162

TABLE III.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the Year 1903.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.							
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.						
		Under 1.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upwards.	
Diphtheria ...	5			2			3	
Erysipelas ...	3			1			1	1
Scarlet Fever ...	3		1	1	1			
Enteric Fever ...	1						1	
Totals	12		1	4	1	5	1	

TABLE IV.
Causes of, and Ages at, Death during the Year 1903.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	DEATHS IN WHOLE DISTRICT AT SUBJOINED AGES.						
	All Ages.	Under 1.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 65.	65 upwards.
Small pox					
Measles				
Scarlet fever				
Whooping-cough	1		1		
Enteritis	1			1
Other septic diseases					
Phthisis	8		1	7
Other tubercular diseases	1			1	
Cancer, malignant disease	2				2
Bronchitis	1			1
Pneumonia	2	1		1
Other diseases of the Respiratory organs	3	1	1	1
Alcoholism, Cirrhosis of liver ...							
Premature birth	3	3		
Diseases and accidents of parturition	1			1
Heart diseases	5			1 4
Accidents	2	1	1	
Suicides				
Apoplexy	8			1 7
Old Age	8			8
All other causes	12	3	1	2 3 2
All causes	58	7	5	2 4 17 23



STOWMARKET

Urban District Council.

Annual Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR

1903.